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# AN Epiſtle of Love

To all that are in preſent

# SUFFERINGS,

Whether Inwardly, or Outwardly.

Whether they are, or have been OFFICERS or SOULDIERS of the

# ARMIE,

*OR,*

*RULERS* or *GOVERNORS*

Of Theſe

# NATIONS,

Or, *PUBLIKE PREACHERS*, or any other, who are in fear of the loſs of Life, Liberty, or Eſtate; or any other Suffering that is like to come upon them;

*Read theſe Lines in the fear of the Lord and receive them as the Teſtimony of a Friend in love to all your ſouls.*

*JOHN CROOK.*

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*London*, Printed by *M. I.* and are to be ſold by *Robert Wilſon*, at the Signe of the *Black-ſpread-Eagle* and *Wind-Mill*, in *Martins L' Grand*, 1660.

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AN

# Epiſtle of Love

To all that are in preſent

## SUFFERINGS,

Whether *Inwardly*, or *Outwardly*.

*Upon the firſt day of the fourth Month, 1660. as I was travelling upon the way, there came upon my heart a deep ſence of your Conditions, whereupon I was preſſed in ſpirit to write theſe following Lines.*

MAny have been the Warnings, Counſel and Advice which hath bin given unto you from the Lord, out of the love that he bears unto you, who would not have you to periſh, but rather that you might repent, & do your firſt Works, and live; and therefore hath he ſent unto you of his Servants, early and late, to fore-warn you of the evils and dangers that were coming upon you; But ſo were your hearts hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and you choaked with the cares of this life, and your minds ſo filled and taken up with the preſent enjoyments of worldly delights and fleſhly eaſe, that there was no room or entrance for any thing that came unto you, though delivered in never ſo much tenderneſs and bowels of affection, from a true ſight and deep ſence of what muſt unavoidably overtake you, becauſe you like *Jeſſeron* were grown fat, & kicked againſt what could be ſaid unto you, looking upon your ſelvs as ſo enriched with worldly glory & delights, & ſo decked therewith, that you ſate as *Queens*, as if none could pluck you from your Throne or ſeats, becauſe of the ſureneſs and firmneſs of your ſtanding, as you thought and concluded in your ſelves; and your work was how to climb up higher, and to ſoare aloft in your glory, beyond any that had been before you, that ſo your Families might be great, and your

Names renowned to Posterity, and your Issues enriched with your gettings and possessions, so that you were just like the wild Asse-Colt upon the Mountains and high Hills, snuffing up the wind, and kicking the heel, and laughing at, and having in derision all those that came unto you (in the Name of the Lord) with the Word of the Lord, concluding it to be but the fancy of a drunken brain, or the Products and Off-spring of a præcipitated *Zeal*, without a true *Understanding*; and so you made light of it, and made no doubt in your selves, to shake off those things like *Pauls* shaking off the *Viper* off of his hand; and (like *Samson*) to go forth as at other times, but knew not how, by that fleshly confidence, and carnal security, and worldly delights and pleasures, which had made you (like drunkenmen) not onely fearless and careless, but also senceless of what could be said unto you, or done against you; so high had you made your Nests, that you feared not the hand that could pluck you down; and therefore it was your manner (in that light, elevated, and transported spirit) either with scorn and disdain wholly to reject and refuse either the hearing of such Words and Counsels as was tendered unto you either by Message in words or writing, or otherwise to receive them in the feigned humility and complementary spirit, putting off the more serious hearing or reading thereof (with *Felix*) until a more convenient season, satisfying your selves with this imaginary conceit, that you had pleased and given content unto the persons that so spake or writ unto you, this being your utmost end and design, if by all you could but procure popular applause, and ingratiate your selves into any Party or Interest, thereby to corroberate and strengthen your seat and standing; and all your *confessions*, *professions*, and *acknowledgements* were but like *Absolom* in the day of his advance, saying with him in your hearts, *O that all men would come unto us*, (that there might be none to oppose you, or disquiet your ease) *& we would do them Justice!* But this was but to palliate your worldly Interests, that you were with so much eagerness seeking to exalt. But now is your Month come upon you, and the day that was threatned (and you forewarned

warned of it) hath overtaken you; and it is a day of gloominess and darkness, and thick Clouds, so that it appears to be night rather then day, and the Sun to be set and gone down, and the shadow of death approaches, and fears and amazements seem to compass you about as a mighty Host, and your Names and Posterities to be blotted out, and ignominy and reproach to be cast upon you, and to be your portion from the basest of men; and instead of *Crisping-Pins*, and *gorgeous Attires* and *Apparel*, and *mincing* with your *feet*, and *sweet fumes*, and *odours* and *smells*, shall be *stenches*, and the *smell* of *Sulphur*, and that which shall be an abhorring and a loathing unto them that you have trampled upon, and thought too mean to converse withall; and that breeding which you are crept into, and that conformity to the World, and the greatness and glory thereof, and that fellowship and communion which you are encreasing apace with those who have their portion in this life, even unto them also shall you be a disdain and an hissing, so that you are become (like *Israel* of old) as the Vine amongst the Trees of the Forrest, which when it hath left its bearing and bringing forth of fruit, it is good for nothing, not so much as to make a *Pin* of, so as to hang a Vessel thereon, but is only become as *Fewel* for the Fire. Wo is me, wo is me for you! (what will become of you?) for I am pained, I am pained, my bowels roul within me because of the utter desolation that is coming upon you, even to the utmost! and then shall those that you have scorned, laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes, which shall come upon you as an armed man, and you shall not be able to withstand his dread, because of the load of guilt, and the weight of sin that lyes upon your consciences, and presseth you down even to the nethermost Hell, and whelmes you, and plunges you into the utter darkness, even unto the thick darkness that may be felt; for your time of working is over, and the night in which no man can work is come upon you, and though you seek to flye as upon Dromedaries, and to make a League with death and Hell, and by your compliances with, & your calling to the Rocks, the Hills, and the Mountains,

tains, yet ſhall they not be able to hide you from the wrath of the Lamb, nor to ſhelter you from the indignation of him that is too ſtrong for you; and though yon flye upon the ſwift, a ſwifter ſhall overtake; for you ſhall not be able to eſcape his fury, though you flye to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, yet there ſhall his hand find you out. And you that have numbred him amongſt tranſgreſſors, and hardened your necks againſt his reproof in your own hearts and conſciences, and have had them in deriſion that have directed you thereunto, to take heed and to obey his counſel, leſt you periſht in the gain-ſaying, and the Spirit of Grace ceaſt ſtriving with you; and then he that hath ſuffered long and born the iniquity, withdraw his ſhoulder, and the Word of his Power, whereby he upholds all things; and then you bear your own iniquity, and feel the weight and burthen thereof, and then ſhall you know by woful experience, and drink of the Cup of his Fury without mixture of mercy or ſupport; and who is able then to abide or ſtand, when thus he Miniſters pure wrath and diſpleaſure, in the fierceneſs of his indignation againſt, and upon the rebellious, who would not hearken in the day of their proſperity, but were grown rich, and full, and wiſe, and ſtrong, and ſaid in themſelves, *We have need of nothing, tuſh, our tongues are our own, who ſhall us controul? For we know what it is to be religious, and to profeſs God and Chriſt, and the Scriptures; for theſe things we have profeſſed and known, and we were once zealous in them, and for them, and were tender-hearted, and broken in our ſpirits, and then could we weep and mourn, and pray, and faſt, and tell of our experiences, and durſt not commit ſin, nor do any thing that we knew to be evil, becauſe of a feare that was upon us; But now we are paſt thoſe things, and mind not the feeling of them, but account thoſe as poſſeſſed with a* Fanatick Spirit, *that ſay that they are moved by the ſpirit of the Lord to mind us of our former years, and by-paſt dayes of tenderneſs, and ſpeak ſo much unto us of feeling that broken heart, and contrite ſpirit, and true thirſt and hunger after the living God; which ſometimes we felt, and condemn and cry againſt all knowledge and ſpeculative notions, above and beyond the feelings, as that which will not avail, nor ſtand in ſtead in the day of the Lord; and thoſe in our*

ſelves

ſelves we condemned, and the ſpirit by which they ſpake unto us, we judged to be Fanatical, and therefore it is juſtly come upon us to have that Name given unto us by our Enemies, which we in our hearts and ſpirits gave unto, and ſaid of our Friends: For if we had not ſo looked upon them, we would have taken their counſel. But we looked upon thoſe former times of tenderneſſe in Religion, to be the dayes of our minority and infancy, and we are now come beyond thoſe things, and ſome of us grown paſt feeling, into a belief that there is nothing ſin, but what a man imagines ſo to be; and ſo are ſoared aloft, and mounted up upon the Wings of Reaſon and State-Policy, looking upon that to be Religion wherein the ſelf-ſafety and ſecurity is moſt preſerved and promoted; and ſo have concluded within our ſelves, that the ground of our former trouble inwardly, and the ground of the like trouble that is upon others now, did and doth ariſe from the diſtruſt of our Reaſon, and ſo have concluded all inward feeling and poſſeſſing of the preſence of God, and the light of his countenance, to be but the ſtrength of fancy or imagination; and this apprehenſion and belief hath been ſtrengthened in us by the many experiences, and examples that in our obſervations we have taken notice of; namely, What a general and univerſal defection and falling away there hath been in all ſorts of perſons, in the ſeveral and variety of Judgements and Opinions that have ſprung up, and the reſpective confidence that they have had of their wayes and opinions, and their incidency and proneneſs to be taken with the glory and riches of this preſent world, and equally with a Zeal to purſue after them when they have had an opportunity in their hands to enrich themſelves thereby, having obſerved all ſorts, and tryed all ſorts of Judgements and Opinions; and when they have been tryed with opportunities as aforeſaid, they have been found too light, and loſt their zeal and tenderneſſe in Religion; and therefore from theſe obſervations, experiences, and tryals, we have been ſtrengthened in our beliefe, That to get wealth, and live at eaſe, and ſecure our places, and to comply to any man, or with any thing in order to this end, hath been goodneſs enough, and the very Religion of our hearts, though with our Tongues and our Lips we have ſpoken and profeſſed otherwiſe. O thou exalted above the Stars, and art climbed up another way, and haſt ſet up thy Neſt on high, and fenced about as with impregnable Walls, whoſe ſcaredneſs and confidence is all thy

thy safety; the Lord is undermining thy Foundation, and he is bringing thee down as with a mighty hand; and he is causing thy fall to be as a Mil-stone into the Sea; and he is making thine Enemies to rule over thee, and thou that hast been in the jollity and making merry, and sending and receiving the gifts in this way wherein the Witnesses have lain slain in the streets of the great City; the Spirit of Life from the Lord is entring into them again, and they shall stand upon their feet, and fire shall come down from Heaven, and consume their Enemies, and they shall torment all that dwell upon the Earth: Therefore heare the Word of the Lord, O ye stout-hearted and stiff-necked, whose hearts are become as an Iron sinew and whose Sin is written as with the Point of a *Diamond*; O tremble, tremble at the Word of the Lord! which saith, *He gave you space to repent, but you repented not*! Wherefore a Bed of Torment is preparing for you, and the Cup which you gave to others, shall you drink, and you shall squeez out the dregs thereo; Wo and misery is coming upon you, and languishing and distresse shall cover you; and becausе you will not hear the voice of the Rod in the day of your sulnes, you shall hear the voice of *Wrath* and *Desolation*, and *Flood* upon *Flood* shall come upon you, and *Billow* upon *Billow* shall overflow you, so that you shall not be able to escape nor flye from his presence.

O hear, hear the Word of the Lord, and hearken, that yet notwithstanding your Souls may live, and if it be possible, may be redeemed out of the Land of darkness, and the deep captivity in which they are plunged. Do not flye, nor make a league with thine Enemies, neither let despair and unbelief swallow thee up; but bear the indignation, because thou hast sinned; lay down thy back, that the plowers may plow deep furrows; lay thy mouth in the dust, and say, *I have sinned, I have sinned, and for my Iniquity are these things come upon me; and because of the weight thereof am I pressed down; and if the Lord arise not, I must perish under them.* Think not upon revenge, *for vengeance is the Lords, and he will repay it*; for thy rising up, and thy restoration, and thy recovery, must not be by an arm of flesh, nor by a Bow of Steel, but by the revealed Arm of the Lord that must bring Salvation to thee; and therefore must thou be

patient

patient, and ſtill, and quiet, and aſcribe *Righteouſneſs* to the Lord, until he ariſe; For through ſore Judgement muſt thou be delivered, and all thy ways muſt be hedged up with thorns, that thou mayeſt not be able to paſs from under his hand, nor from the ſmart of his ſtroke; For this is the day of his recovery, not onely of thy ſoul out of the Pit (that waits in the patience and long-ſuffering) and out of the Mire and the Clay, wherein thy feet have ſtuck faſt, ſo that thou haſt not been able to run in the wayes of *Righteouſneſs*; but alſo of the recovery of the *Corn*, and the *Wine*, and the *Oyle*, which he gave unto thee, and thou hadſt forgotten that he gave it thee, that thou mayeſt return unto him from whom thou art fallen by thine Iniquity; for was it not better with thee in the day of thy meanneſs and poverty, (not onely of Spirit, but outwardly) when thou hadſt not thoſe Poſſeſſions in the Earth that now thou haſt, nor faredſt ſo deliciouſly as now thou doſt, was it not better with thee then, then it is now? Let the Witneſs of God anſwer. And therefore like a Bull into the Net muſt thou be caſt, who haſt been ſeeking liberty and largeneſs for thy ſelf, but haſt not cared how much others were in ſtraightneſs and captivity; therefore is the day come upon thee, wherein the ſame meaſure thou meaſuredſt to others, is meaſured to thy ſelf. Therefore muſt thou bear in patience, that the Seed thou mayeſt know, which the Lords love is unto, and feele it in thy ſelfe, that which hath ſuffered long, even all this time of thy wantonneſs; for this is the Seed which cryes unto God, though thou regardeſt not the cry thereof, becauſe of thy fulneſs, and becauſe of the noiſe that hath been in thy heart, both about keeping what thou haſt already gotten, and how to enlarge thy Barns to hold more; but the cry of the poor hath not been regarded, even that Seed in thee which hath groaned for deliverance; and ſometimes becauſe of the anguiſh thereof, thy ſoul cryed out for diſtreſs, though through the variety of thy pleaſures thou endeavoureſt to murder it, and to ſtop its cry.

Is it not now an acceptable time to ſpeak a Word in due ſeaſon to thee, from one that is ſenſible of thy burthen and travels with thee for thy deliverance? O that thou wouldſt hear, that thy ſoul might live, and even now when the Lord is as one

retired into his place, and all thy *Comforts* and *Lovers* ſeem to ſtand at a diſtance from thee, and thou art as one termed deſolate and forſaken, and the wrath of the Enemy is ready to ſwallow thee up, in telling thee there is no hope for thee, and that the day of thy Viſitation is over, and that the pit will open its mouth, and ſwallow thee up in the ſight of all thine Enemies: Ariſe, ariſe thou Captive Daughter of *Sion*, thou *Exile*, thou *Outcaſt* of *Iſrael*, thou that art termed forſaken both in thine own eyes, and in the eyes of all that behold thee; this is the day of thy deep Viſitation, hear the Voice of the Rod, and know the hand of him that ſmites with it, that through the Chaſtizings and the Rebukings, thy ſoul may be recovered. O ceaſe from man, and from all revengeful thoughts, and hearken not to the counſel of thine own heart, neither lend an ear to the wicked, and lean not to thy own underſtanding; For God's thoughts are not as thy thoughts, neither his wayes like thine; thine are thoughts and wayes of *evil*, his of *good*, therefore judge the diſquietneſs of thy mind with that Grace and Light that gives thee the ſight and the ſence of it, and ſay not, *He hath ſhut up his loving-kindneſs in forgetfulneſs, or will be merciful no more*. Fear not thou worm *Jacob*, though all tread upon thee, be thou ſtill; for thy deliverance muſt be from the Lord, and that is the Seed that lyes low under all, that is dumb and opens not his mouth in revenge, that lyes down in his will, and drinks the Cup, becauſe it is the Father's good pleaſure; For that is the Seed to which the bleſſing belongs, and that is that which muſt hear the Word of the Lord, and come out of *Ægypt*, to worſhip God in his own Land, that that may be ſet free, from which he cannot with-hold his bowels, nor the ſtrength of his love, but that it might be ſet free, that he might render double unto it, beyond what ever entred into thy heart to conceive. And this is the *Seed* that the Lord hath bleſſed, and that can be content both to abound, and to ſuffer want, and to be abaſed, and how to receive at the hand of the Lord, & give it again with the ſame freedom that it was received; and though it hath nothing in the world, as to the enjoyments of the world, yet it poſſeſſeth all things in that its kingdom is not of the world: Neither is it a Seed of ſo low a diſcent,

and

and ſo ignoble an Off-ſpring, as to have its delight or joy in this World; But though it hath lain amongſt the *Pots*, and been as in the *Manger*, yet muſt it have the Wings of the *Dove*, and in the ſimplicity and innocency thereof muſt it mount up over the World, and have its reſt with its Father *Abraham*. And this is the *Seed* that follows his ſteps, and forſakes all to go to the Land that the Lord ſhews it; and believes in the *Hope*, againſt the *Hope*; and ſtaggers not through the weakneſſe of *Faith*, by conſidering the reaſonings of the *Earthly Birth*, or *fleſhly Spirit*, but is ſtrong in the *Faith*, and gives glory unto God, and ſubmits unto him, to let him do what ſeemeth good in his ſight. O *Friends!* had you hearkened unto this, and let it gone free, then had not this day come upon you, nor this hour of darkneſs overtaken you; and therefore now be wiſe, and receive the inſtructions of the *Almighty*, who ſpeaks unto you in the ſecrets of your hearts, that you may hear his voice, and live; for he is ſaying to you as once he did to *Adam* in the *cool of the day*, (now the heats are over) *Where are ye? and what have ye been doing? Have ye not ſinned in eating that which was forbidden, & in feeding upon that which was likely to make wiſe, and beautiful to the eye, & pleaſant to the taſt, but is become as Gall and Wormwood in the belly?* In this day of adverſity when you come to conſider where you are, and what you have been doing, are you not indeed naked? And are you not flying as he was, to the *Buſhes*, and for ſhelter to every imagination and injection that ſprings up in your mindes, and counſel that is given to you from the *Earthly Spirit*, either in your ſelves or others? And are you not ſewing of Fig-Leaves, and making of Coverings for your ſelves to mitigate the offence, as he did, by ſaying, *The woman that thou gaveſt me, deceived me.* And ſo you are covering and hiding by excuſes and pretences, that which in the day of your ſimplicity and tenderneſs you would not have been aſhamed of, and ſince (in the day of your proſperity) have gloryed in as your Crown. O do not ſo, for the Lord will not be mocked; for ſuch as you have ſown, ſuch ſhall you reap. Be not like *Iſrael* of old, to add evil to evil, not onely in forſaking the *Fountain*, but hewing out of inventions and excuſes, which

will not hold in this day of your diſtreſs; but be upright-hearted, and ſingle to God, ſeeking out no covers nor ſinful compliance, leaſt you loſe this day of Viſitation alſo, and the little glimmering of hopes that yet remains for you, if you perſiſt not in your wickedneſs: But on the contrary if you do, ye ſhall go down to the pit where there is no remembrance of him.

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*And you that are, or have been Officers and Souldiers in the ARMY, and are under preſent Sufferings or Burthens.*

WHat need you be troubled? or what true Cauſe have you to be diſquieted? if ſo be the preſent *Officers* and *Souldiers* can govern and command better then you have done, or then hath been in years paſt; if the Officers of the Army be more temperate, more humble, more ſelf-denying, and leſs given to covetouſneſs, and to ſeek great things for themſelves then you did when you were in command: And if the preſent Officers of the *ARMY* be more tender of the Liberties of tender conſciences, and of the juſt Liberties of the People, and more careful of the breach of the Priviledges of *Parliament*, and of all other *Authorities* that rule for God, and in his fear, that are a terror to evil-doers, and a praiſe of, and encouragement to them that do well: And if the preſent Army are leſs in compliance with particular Intereſts for ſelf-ſafety and advantage then you were, what ground or cauſe have you to be troubled. or to ſeek reſtoration to your Places and Truſts? And if they do not exceed you in Righteouſneſs, Holineſs and Juſtice, and good *Diſcipline* of the *Army*, have they not you for an example before them, who for theſe things have caſt you off, and made your habitations deſolate, and your Names to becom a ſtench, and your Families a reproach, and all your Righteouſneſs and good that you have done, and Victories that you have obtained, are buried in oblivion, and your defamation doth ſound beyond your Fame in times paſt. Is not the Lord righteous,

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ous? Or is his Arm ſhortened? Or is his Bowels ſhut up? Or is it not all one with him to ſave by many, or by few; by ſtrength, or without ſtrength, and to overturn, and overthrow theſe alſo which have ſucceeded you, if they ſhall fall ſhort of your righteouſneſs, or thoſe ſteps wherein you walked, as to the governing and ordering of your ſeveral Truſts? Shall not the Lord be avenged on them alſo, if they provoke him as you did, and overthrow them as he hath done you, and that with a ſorer deſtruction, and a greater hand of diſpleaſure, becauſe they have had you as a lively example before them, whom the Lord hath caſt out in their ſight; but luſt after evil things, and the glory of the World, as you did, and were rejected of him? and ſurely if the ſame wickedneſs and ungodlineſs overtake them, that was found amongſt you, their fall ſhall be great, and they ſhall riſe no more; and therefore leave it to the Lord, and ſeek not your own revenge, neither think by *Rebellion*, *Treachery*, or *Hypocriſie* to prevail; *For Judgement is the Lords, and he will repay it*; and if they periſh to do wickedly, and to exceed you in unrighteouſneſs, they ſhall all likewiſe periſh; *For Righteouſneſs* he will have ſet up, and the end of all the changes and overturnings in *England*, it is not that a *May-Pole* ſhould be ſet up, or that Healths ſhould be drunk to the confuſion of *Sion*, but that a *King* ſhould reign in *Righteouſneſs*, and that the Sons and Daughters of *Sion* ſhould rejoyce therein.

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*And to you that are, or have been Rulers or Governours of theſe Nations, and are either at preſent, or in fear of future Sufferings.*

DO not you emulate, nor contemn thoſe into whoſe hands the preſent Government is committed; neither ſeek after revenge, or ſuffer your hearts to boyle becauſe you are thrown down, and they got up; if they will heare the cauſe

cauſe of the fatherleſs, and of the widdow, and judge with equity therein, and relieve the oppreſſed, and let the Captive go free; and reſpect no man's perſon in Judgement, neither divert *Juſtice* becauſe of any man's opinion or perſwaſion; but equally adminiſter *diſtributive Juſtice* to all, and not be offended at one man becauſe he could not put off his Hat, and give him flattering Titles, and therefore would do him no *Juſtice*, but trample upon him whom all trampled upon, and exalt that party that was moſt in eſteem, and gratifie him who could reſpect mens perſons with his hat in his hand, and give him flattering Titles, though his *Cauſe* was worſe; if thoſe in your places now, will not do ſo, but equally diſtribute *Law* and *Juſtice* unto all men, without reſpecting any mans perſon or opinion, and that at a cheaper rate, and with leſs delay; if the preſent *Rulers* and *Governors* do ſo, what cauſe have you to be angry? Becauſe the Lord hath thrown down you, and raiſed up them that are more *righteous*? And what though he be as the *younger Brother*, that profeſs'd not *ſo much*, but practiſed *more*, ſhall not your *Hypocriſie* remain as a blot upon you, while as their *Activity* and *Juſtice* ſhall be their renown? But on the contrary, if they exceed you in *oppreſſion*, *cruelty*, and *injuſtice*, and make greater inroads and breaches upon the *Law* of the *Nation*, and *juſt Liberties* of the *People*, and let looſe the *Reins* of *Government*, ſo that people may take their ſwing in ungodlineſs, and act iniquity without controle, and the conſciences of the Upright be oppreſſed becauſe of their tenderneſs towards God, and the things appertaining to his Kingdom; and ſo he that departs from iniquity become a prey, and the Goals in theſe Nations be fuller of the Servants of the Lord then they were in your dayes, and that onely becauſe they cannot proſtrate their conſciences to the Wills of men; and if their Meetings together to worſhip the Lord in ſpirit and in truth be more obſtructed, and they abuſed by the rude and baſer ſort of people, and that becauſe of the remiſsneſs and backwardneſs of thoſe in Authority, to put a curb unto them, or to execute their places with faithfulneſs

fulneſs againſt evil-doers, according to their truſt, and the Laws of the Nation, will not the Lord caſt them out alſo, as he hath done you before them? And is not his Power the ſame to diſ-throne all Unrighteouſneſs in what perſon or perſons ſoever it be found? And therefore why ſhould you be wrath, or your countenance fallen, if you had done wel, ſhould not you have been accepted? And if theſe be found doing evil, ſhal not they be rejected alſo? Or will the Lord let theſe into his favour, if ſin lye at their door, when as he ſhut you out before them for the ſame thing? And therefore be ſtill and quiet in your minds, and mind the work of your day (and let them alone to theirs) which is, to humble your ſelvs under the mighty hand of God, and be abaſed in his ſight becauſe of your unfaithfulneſs, and the Treachery that was found within your Gates, that ſo you may be reconciled to God, and one unto another, before it be too late, and the day paſs over your heads, and ſo be overtaken unawares, doing the work of the Night, as ſeeking revenge, and the overthrow or diſturbance of the preſent power, which the Lord requires not at your hands, but to leave him to execute Righteouſneſs upon the evil-doers, and to wound the hairy Scalp of all his Enemies; for he will be avenged, and that right ſpeedily againſt all that hate *Sion*.

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*To you who are called* Publike Preachers, *or* Miniſters *of the Goſpel, and are under preſent Sufferings, or poſſeſſed with fear that you ſhall ſuffer either in Relation to your Places or Conſciences.*

WHy are you afraid? And wherefore are your hearts diſquieted? If you have preached the Goſpel in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, will not that keep you in peace? Or is not your Goſpel the Goſpel of peace? Or are you afraid becauſe you made uſe of the Goſpel to preach up War? If you have diſcharged your duties faithfully, and ſought

no man's goods, but their good? If ſo, will not the good overcome the evil? And if you ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, are you not bleſſed? And if you can live upon the Goſpel, will not that maintain you, and ſave you? Why are you then troubled?

If another Generation more righteous then you, ſpring up, and thoſe that have been long a humbling, and under a ſharp rebuke, be reſtored to their places again, and you put out; and if they preach better, and live better, that their moderation may be known unto all men, and that they are not ſo greedy of filthy lucre as you were, nor uſe that rigor and ſeverity, and inhumanity, which ſome of you have done, in caſting poor people into priſon, and ſeperating man and wife, until they have dyed in the Goal, and that for a thing of nought, as for a Smoke-penny, and a Garden-penny, and ſuch like trifles as ſhould not be named amongſt Chriſtians, much leſs amongſt thoſe who call themſelves the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and all this becauſe for conſcience ſake they could not let him gather that had not ſcattered; nor him reap that had not ſown; nor his Ox feed in that Corn which he had not trodden out; nor pay him wages whom he never hired, neither did any work for him; if thoſe Miniſters that come after you ſhal not do theſe things, nor make ſhipwrack of *Faith* and a *good Conſcience*, by ſerving the times, and complying with worldly *Intereſts* to enrich themſelves, and fare deliciouſly thereby; but ſhall at all ſeaſons preach freely, giving good example both in *Life* and *Doctrine*, oppreſſing no mans *Conſcience*, but giving freely, and freely receiving; not following *your* ſteps, but the ſteps of *Chriſt* & his *Apoſtles*, who choſe to obey *God* rather than *Man*, and not to comply for *ſelf-ſafety* & *advantage*, who *ſpake* as the *Spirit* gave them *utterance*, and not what men commanded contrary thereto, wil not the Lord bleſs them? But if theſe that come in your Places ſhall follow your ſteps in all or any of the things aforeſaid, wil not the Lord drive them out, and caſt them off for their rebellion & unfaithfulneſs, as he hath done & is doing of you before them? & therefore why ſhould

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you be troubled, except for the load of guilt and weight of oppreſſion, and mercileſs cruelty that lyes upon you; and for theſe things you ought to be humbled, that if it be poſſible you may be recovered out of the *gall of bitterneſs*, and *bond of iniquity*, that ſo your ſouls may be ſaved in this day of your Viſitation and ſore chaſtiſement that is coming upon you, and you reſtored to your former *integrity* and *uprightneſs of heart*, which ſome times ſome of you were acquainted with, before you walked in the way of *Balaam*, to attempt to curſe *Iſrael*, or to *run greedily for gifts and rewards*. O that there were an ear open to hear the voice of this *Chaſtiſement*, that your ſouls might be recovered out of the ſnare of the Enemy!

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*To all thoſe that are under Sufferings in their hearts and minds, becauſe they do not underſtand the end of the Lord in theſe late Tranſactions.*

KNow ye the *Seed* of *God*, even *Abraham's Seed*; and as that comes to be raiſed and brought forth, and bear ruſe in your hearts, ſo ſhall ye underſtand the mind of the Lord, and he will not hide from you the thing that he doth. Are you ſtrangers in *Iſrael*, that you know not the *Cauſes* and *Provocations* that the Lord hath had from day to day, from a *gain-ſaying* and *diſobedient people*, *who draw near him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him*; and who ſaid, *Is not the Lord amongſt us? no evil ſhall come unto us*; who had provoked him to jealouſie from day to day; and after many a *Warning* given unto them by the *ſervants* of the *Lord*, and his *Overturning* time after time, yet would they not hearken, but rebelled more and more, and continued to oppreſs the innocent, and for their own ends gratified the ungodly, and cried up thoſe whom the Lord by his Word cryed againſt; and not onely ſo, but what wickedneſs was there found within

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their *Gates*, and injuſtice in their *Courts*, and pride and fulneſs of Bread within their *Palaces*, exceeding any that had been before them: Beſides, their Profeſſion of Religion, made ſubſervient to *State-Policy*; *Brother* betraying *Brother*, & one *Friend* undermining another, and all to promote *ſelf*, which the Lord had thrown down in others, and they in an eminent way were ſetting it up in themſelves. How could the Lord but reckon for theſe things? Was not his ſuffering long, and his patience ſtretched out to the uttermoſt, and the meaſure of their iniquities full? And was it not then righteous with the Lord to give them up into the hands of the treacherous dealer, who themſelves had dealt treacherouſly one with another, and to others? And ſo hath he repaid them with that which they requited others withall: Therefore ſay not you, *Why hath the Lord done thus*? Nor buſie not your minds or thoughts about the cauſe of his dealings; but mind that in your own hearts that accuſeth you for your Treachery againſt the Lord, who hath ſhewed thee O man, *what is good, to deal juſtly, to walk uprightly, to ſhew mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*. Keep thou to that in thine own heart, for that is that which may be *known of God, which is manifeſt in thee*; and by that he ſhews the O man, what is good, and to that muſt thou take heed, leſt thou drop into the ſame Snare with thoſe whoſe fall thou art admiring, and ſo their caſe become thy caſe; for thou ſtandeſt by *Faith*, and except thou believeſt in that (within thy ſelfe) that ſhews thee what is good, thou canſt not avoid falling likewiſe; neither canſt thou by beating thy brain, or muſing in thine underſtanding, underſtand the end of theſe things; for they are too hard for thee to find out, until thou return into the *Sanctuary*, which is the *Grace of God* manifeſt *in thee*, and thereby ſhalt thou learn the *fear of the Lord*, (whereby the heart ſhall be kept clean) and thou kept out of their Snares.

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*To you who are in present Power, who are raised up by the fall and overthrow of those that went before you.*

DO not you boast your selves in your own strength, nor glory not over those who are under your feet, but consider the end of the Lord in these things; For not for your sakes hath he wrought this change, that you might glory in the *Arm of flesh*, or exalt your selves because the day is *yours*, but know assuredly, That it was to be avenged of an *hypocritical* and *gain-saying generation*, who said, and did not; and therefore is he arisen in righteousnesse to plead with them, and that those whom they have ruled over, might once more rule over them, that you by their fall might take warning, and not lust after that which they lusted after, nor oppress that which they oppressed, both in themselves and others; but that you might undo the heavy burthens, and take off every yoke, and let the oppressed go free; which if you do, both as to *Civil* and *Spiritual Rights*, (which they promised to do, but did not) then shall you prosper, and the righteous rejoice in your Government; but if those things continue for which they were cast out before you, then shall the indignation of the Lord smoke against you, and your fall be great and speedy, and that into mischief, and shall rise no more. O that you had hearts to consider the languishing state of this Nation! that *Righteousnesse* might be encouraged, *Justice* promoted, *Sin* and *Iniquity* stopped, and you a terror to the Workers thereof. Let not that be found amongst you, which was found amongst them that were cast out before you, to advance any *Sect*, *Party*, or *Opinion*; but he of every *Sect*, *Party*, or *Judgement* that fears God, and works Righteousnes, let him find protection from your Government; so shal Partiality be shut out, and *distributive Justice* and *impartial Righteousnesse* be administred unto all, and run

down our ſtreets like a ſtream. Then ſhall it be well for you that the Lord hath ſo long chaſtized you, that you might learn Righteouſneſs, and hate Iniquity; ſo ſhall the Nation be healed, and the diſtractions thereof compoſed, and the end of our Wars attained, and you (with all that fear the Lord) ſhall be Crowned with Victory over your Enemies, and love from all your Friends. But on the contrary, if Iniquity be ſheltered under your Wing, and Unrighteouſneſs, Prophaneneſs, and Ungodlineſs be countenanced, encouraged, or connived at; then ſhall the fury of the Lord ſmoke againſt you, and his Righteouſneſs ſhall be revealed to throw you down, and that with an hand more eminent and remarkable, then that which brought you in, and the ſound and report of your deſtruction and extirpation ſhall exceed and go further, and ſtrike the Nations afar off with greater aſtoniſhment and amazement of ſpirit, even their ears ſhall tingle, and affrightment ſhall take hold upon them, becauſe of the Revelation of the righteous Judgements of the Lord againſt a rebellious people, whom he would have healed again and again, but they would not, but inſulted and revolted yet more and more, and abuſed the patience and long-ſuffering of the Lord towards them, and turned their deliverances againſt the Lord, to puff and ſwell themſelves up, beyond any that ever was before them: If this be your ſtate, you ſhall periſh ſuddenly, & that without remedy; and then ſhall you know that the Lord hath ſpoken by me.

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*To all that fear the Lord, and whoſe hearts are upright with him; and yet are ſenſible of the ſuffering-ſtate of the Church that is in God; becauſe of the oppreſſions, and weights, and burthens that lye upon the Righteous Seed.*

FEar you not, nor be diſmayed with any amazement; for for your ſakes will the Lord ariſe, and ſhake terribly the

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the Earth, and remove that which is ſhaken, that that which cannot be ſhaken may remain; and your heads will be lift up above all your Enemies, and the day of your Redemption ſhall draw nigh, and *Satan* ſhall be trodden under your feet, and you caught up into the Mountain of the Lord, where ye ſhall feed upon the fat things which he hath prepared upon his holy Mountain; and this Mountain ſhall you know to be over, and on top of all the Mountains; and here you ſhall abide and dwell in the dwelling-place that is upon *Mount Sion*; and upon all your glory ſhall be a defence, and none ſhall be able to make you afraid: And then ſhall ye know him that ſhall ſtand the laſt upon the earth, and ye ſhal receive Dominion from him, whereby ye ſhall reign with him for evermore. Therefore watch ye unto prayer, and be you diligent in the work of the Lord, that you may finiſh with faithfulneſs the Teſtimony that he hath given you to bear for his Names ſake; and know aſſuredly, that nothing can harm you while you follow that which is good. And watch ye in the Light of Chriſt, that ye may be kept out of that part in your ſelves which appertains to this world, and the things thereof, in that good part which ſhall never be taken from you, in which the *God* of this *World* hath no part; and there is your ſafety for ever, there is the Faith known that ſtops the mouths of Lyons, and rebukes the roarings of the Sea, and keeps in the calm, as in an *Ark*, when all the World ſhall be overwhelmed with the Lords wrath and diſpleaſure: Then ſhall you be ſafe, and plant the Earth with righteouſneſs, and the former things ſhall be paſſed away, and the old Heaven and the old Earth melted away, and paſſed as a ſcroul, and the new Heaven and the new Earth (wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs) ſhall remain, and the Inhabitants therein ſhall rejoice, and ſhall ſing the Songs of *Sion*, and the Songs of the *Lamb*, the praiſe of him that hath ſaved them: For your Kingdom is not of this world, but he hath choſen you to be as Pilgrims and Strangers in, and to the World: Although your bodies be in the World, yet uſe it and poſſeſs it as though you uſed and poſſeſſed it not,

that

that you may be known to be the redeemed of the Lord, that are ſeeking a City that hath Foundations, and your Converſations may be known to be above the Earth with all its glory, and you ſaved out of all, and raiſed up over all, by him that throws down, and exalts at his pleaſure. This is the Word of the Lord to you all, you are the Lord's Hoſt, and he will go before you, and be your Rereward; and by you and through you will he bring mighty things to paſs, and at the ſound whereof the Nations ſhall tremble; and at the hearing whereof the Earth ſhall be aſtoniſhed, becauſe of the Lords appearing in his Sons and Daughters; unto the brightneſs of whoſe ariſing many ſhall come from far, and at whoſe feet the Riches and the glory of the Gentiles ſhal be laid down: And theſe things you that are faithful ſhall know; and be not you inquiſitive which way the Lord will bring theſe things to paſs, for his own Arm ſhall do it, and that not by Might nor by Power, but by his Spirit wil he remove the Mountains, and all that lets, out of the way; and therefore be not you faithleſs, but believing, and dwell in the patience, out of that which would limit the holy one, either to Time or Means; ſo ſhall you come to the overcoming, and to be more then Conquerors through Chriſt your life, who is manifeſt in your mortal fleſh. And as concerning the Times & Seaſons, I need not to write unto you; for you know perfectly in your ſelves, that the day of Lord ſo cometh as a Thief in the night; that when they ſhall cry *Peace*, and *Safety*, then ſudden deſtruction ſhal come upon them; for now is their hour, and the power of darkneſs: But dwell you in the ſecret place of the moſt high, under the ſhadow of his wing, and enter into your privy Chambers, and ſhut the door til the calamity be overpaſt; for it ſhall not be long until the Lord ſhall viſit his Seed, and gather it from off the barren Hills and Mountains, that they that have gone aſtray through the Allurements, Pleaſures, and Vanities of this World, ſhall be gathered into the Fold, & then ſhall there be one Fold, and one Shepherd; and the Sons of God ſhall ſing together, and the Morning-Stars ſhall rejoice

and

and clap their hands for joy, becauſe of ſo great ſalvation; and they that are faithful ſhal know and ſee this, and be glad; for the Lord wil not leave you, nor forſake you; you that are bold, valiant and faithful for his *Name*, that love not your lives unto the death, that you may finiſh the Teſtimony of Jeſus, but are as ſheep appointed for the ſlaughter, and are like thoſe that are killed all the day long; yet the Lord my God wil ariſe for your ſakes, and wil utter his voice from *Sion*, and his thunderings from *Jeruſalem*, and you ſhal be glad with his *Salvation*, to the praiſe of his *Name* for ever: *Amen.*

*John Crook.*

THE END.